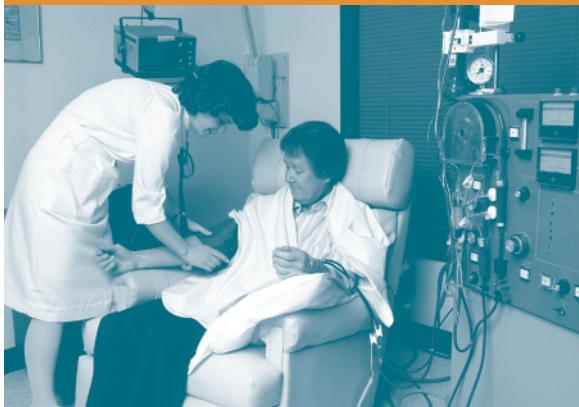


CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES



DIALYSIS TECHNICIANS



WHAT DOES A DIALYSIS TECHNICIAN DO?

DIALYSIS TECHNICIANS operate kidney dialysis machines which filter normal waste products and excess fluids from the blood of patients whose kidneys no longer function. Dialysis Technicians perform their duties under the supervision of physicians or registered nurses. They have clinical and technical skills and can be responsible for both direct patient care as well as dialysis equipment maintenance and repair. Dialysis Technicians perform the following tasks:

- Get dialyzer (artificial kidney) and delivery system ready, monitor all equipment while in use, and clean equipment following treatment.
- Record the patient's weight and vital signs before and after treatment.

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2003

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- Observe the patient during the dialysis procedure, monitoring and recording vital signs during treatment.
- Administer local anesthetics and drugs under supervision.
- Assess patients for any complications that occur during the procedure. They must be ready to take any necessary emergency measures—including administering oxygen or performing basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Train patients for at-home dialysis treatment.

Dialysis Technicians may also be known as Hemodialysis or Renal Dialysis Technicians.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Dialysis Technicians include:

- Operation Monitoring – Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
- Operation and Control – Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- Technology Design – Generating or adapting equipment and technology to serve user needs.
- Active Listening – Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- Oral Expression – The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- Written Comprehension – The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- Information Ordering – The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).

- Medicine and Dentistry – Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
- Problem Sensitivity – The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Dialysis Technicians work primarily in outpatient dialysis clinics. They work in clean, climate-controlled environments. They often stand for prolonged periods of time, and the work can be strenuous. Working with seriously ill patients, they face exposure to infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, as well as exposure to hazardous chemicals while carrying out their duties. These risks can be minimized by following prescribed sterilization procedures and by using universal precautions such as gowns, gloves, and face shields.

Union Membership

Dialysis Technicians may be members of a union covering health care workers.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The Department of Health Services indicates that as of early 2003, there were about 4,800 Dialysis Technicians certified in California. The Department indicates that this number has increased since certification became a requirement to work in the field.

Trends

Two factors will encourage growth in this occupation: the number of patients on dialysis continues to increase and Dialysis Technicians are increasingly replacing registered nurses in treatment centers. Dialysis patients also tend to stay in treatment longer.

This is in addition to the general population increase and the rise in the elderly population,

which is the age group that is most likely to require dialysis care.

Although the number of kidney transplants has continued to rise, available donated organs remain limited, and the impact on the number of patients in dialysis will be minimal.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

An informal survey of wages shows that Dialysis Technicians generally start at about \$10.00 - \$13.25 per hour, and work up to about \$20.00 per hour after a number of years on the job. Technicians who work evenings or night shifts usually earn a shift differential of about \$2.00 - \$3.50 per hour.

Technicians affiliated with large, acute-care hospitals normally receive higher salaries than Technicians employed in outpatient clinics. Wages are generally higher in urban areas.

Hours

Most dialysis clinics are open evenings and weekends to accommodate their patients who work. Technicians have their choice of varied shifts and full-time and part-time schedules.

Most Technicians work a 40-hour, five-day week. Weekend and after-hours work may be necessary.

Benefits

Employee benefits usually include vacation, holidays, sick leave, retirement benefits, and health and life insurance plans. Educational leave and fee reimbursement benefits are also common in this industry.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

To perform their job, technicians must fully understand the dialysis equipment – the basic theory of dialysis, the design of the machine, and exactly how it works.

Although most employers would prefer to hire Dialysis Technicians who are already certified, employers may hire in-service trainees for their approved training and testing programs. Applicants for Dialysis Technician trainee positions generally must have a high school diploma or equivalent. Other desirable qualifications include prior patient care or related medical experience and demonstrated written and verbal communication skills. Some employers require applicants to complete two or more years of college with an emphasis in health science course work.

Licensing and Certification

Dialysis Technicians who work in California must be certified by the California Department of Health Services. They then hold the title of Certified Hemodialysis Technician (CHT).

To become a CHT, individuals must either:

1. Complete a California Department of Health Services approved training and testing program in a hemodialysis clinic, hospital unit, or private school, or
2. Be certified by the Board of Nephrology Examination for Nurses and Technicians (BONENT).

Technicians from another state who are BONENT certified can work in California without repeating the training.

The National Nephrology Technology Certification Board (NNTCB) offers certification examinations for both nephrology clinical technicians and nephrology biomedical technicians. The NNTCB is affiliated with the National Association of Nephrology Technicians/Technologists.

Continuing Education

The State requires 30 continuing education hours be completed every four years for license renewal.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Dialysis Technicians or job seekers interested in trainee positions should contact dialysis clinics,

hospitals that offer hemodialysis care, employment agencies specializing in the medical field, and the local Employment Development Department Job Service office. Individuals interested in working in Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals should contact the Federal Office of Personnel Management. Professional journals and newsletters of organizations that deal with dialysis or kidney disease may also list jobs.

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under dialysis clinics or hospitals. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office www.edd.ca.gov/jslc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Advancement opportunities for Dialysis Technicians depend upon the location of the job. In most facilities, Technicians can advance to a Chief Technician position. Dialysis Technicians working in some of the larger clinics have the opportunity to advance to Machine Maintenance Technician. In this more specialized position, the technician is responsible for all dialysis machine maintenance and repair. A majority of employers also encourage the Technicians to continue their education to become licensed vocational nurses, registered nurses, or other more specialized health care therapists or providers.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Department of Health Services
Licensing and Certification Program
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320
(916) 445-2070
www.dhs.cahwnet.gov

National Association of Nephrology
Technicians/Technologists (NANT)
P.O. Box 2307
Dayton, OH 45401-2307
(937) 586-3705
(877) 607-6268
www.dialysistech.org

Employment Projections by Occupation
www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm

Employment and Wages by Occupation
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	No. 17
Diagnostic Radiologic Technologists	No. 89
Laboratory Assistants and Technicians (Except Health)	No. 201
Medical Assistants	No. 513
Electrocardiograph (EKG) Technicians	No. 538

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)
Health Technologists and Technicians,
All Other 29-2099

O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)
Health Technologists and Technicians,
All Other 29-2099.99

OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)
Health Care Professionals,
Paraprofessionals/Technicians, Other 32999

DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)
Dialysis Technician 078.362-014

